

REMARKS AND ARGUMENTS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims of the present Application. Claims 1, 12-15 and 21-25 are presently pending. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections herein and in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants amend claim 1 herein to clarify claimed features. Such amendments are merely intended to clarify the claimed features, and should not be construed as further limiting the claimed invention in response to the cited documents.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1, 12-15, and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 6,456,955 (Andrews et al.). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that Andrews does not anticipate the rejected claims.

With respect to independent claim 1, Applicants are unable to find, in Andrews, any disclosure of communication links between automated devices and a hub-box. As discussed in the present Specification (e.g., paragraph [0028]-[0029]), such communication links allow communication between the hub-box and the automated devices. In contrast, Andrews merely describe a chromatography system including a solvent delivery system 12, a sample manager 10, a column 14, a detector 16, and a Data System 18 (“components”). *See Andrews* at, e.g., FIG. 1, Col. 3 lines 34-40. The components of the chromatography system do not appear to be able to communicate with each other via communication links. Moreover, these components do not appear to be automated devices for manufacturing. Manual intervention by a trained operator 100 is required to prepare the chromatography system for qualification to ensure that the samples, solvents, and the separation column are ready for analysis. *See Andrews* at, e.g., Col. 2 lines 19-35; Col. 4 lines 6-29.

Further, Applicants are unable to find, in Andrews, any disclosure of a hub-box operationally controlling the automated devices, as well as facilitating communication between

them. The Examiner appears to equate the claimed hub-box to the Data System 18. *See Action* p. 2. Although data is collected and placed within an Oracle database, the Data System 18 does not appear to control the operation of the various components of the chromatography system or facilitate communication between them. Indeed, the apparent lack of communication links between the various components of the chromatography system renders automated control and communication impracticable.

Consequently, Andrews fails to disclose all of the elements and features of claim 1. Claims 12-15 and 21-25 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1. As discussed above, claim 1 is allowable. It is axiomatic that any dependent claim which depends from an allowable base claim is also allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully ask the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of these claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned attorney at his number set out below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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